



Command notes

Maj. Gen. Darryll D.M. Wong

The Adjutant General

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The following is my opening statement and answers to several questions posed to me by the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Governmental Operations and Military Affairs during my confirmation hearing Feb. 17. It provides some insight into my management philosophy and is a roadmap for where it'd like to lead the department in the years ahead:

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the committee, thank you for giving me this opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored and humbled to have this opportunity to be considered for the position of Adjutant General for the State DoD. I want to thank Governor Abercrombie for his faith in nominating me and giving me the opportunity to be considered by the Senate.

There are many who have supported me in my life that I would also like to acknowledge and thank. My wife Tiki, my children Tasha, Talia, Tyler, and Taryn, and my parents D. K. and Dorothy Wong. All have made countless sacrifices for me as well as been my support and sounding board when I needed advice. Their unconditional love has been a constant source of strength.

I am also grateful for Maj Gen (ret) Edward Richardson who had the vision and faith in me to bring me to the HQ of the Hawaii Air National Guard to mentor me. I'd like to thank my predecessor MG (ret) Robert Lee for his past leadership of this department. There are many more outside the military family that have had a strong influence in my life including Coach Tony Sellitto, Pete Velasco, Nappy Napoleon, and Andrew Lum that I also wish to thank. It is a combination of all of them that have raised me and had a positive influence on my life and how I think and make decisions.

I have been brought up with the values of a strong Chinese family as well as those of Maryknoll School. The combination has etched in my mind and heart a strong desire to serve. I understand that we are where we are because of those that came before us and as the next generation it is important for us to honor the past and work tirelessly to ensure the future. The term "Noblesse Oblige" (much is given much is expected), is another term etched in my mind and heart. This is why I view my role as the Adjutant General, if given the opportunity to serve, not just as a job but as my "life". I will serve the people of Hawaii and will protect them and their property and ensure their safety as my singular focus.

I am a Vietnam veteran; I have served on active duty, worked in the Pentagon, led diplomatic missions to China for the military and led committees at the National level. I have been a traditional Guardsman for my entire time in the Hawaii Air National Guard. I flew for Aloha Airlines for 34 years till its closing. I have seen where the National Guard has been and have insights on where we need to go. We are moving into a post war era with

the planned pull back from Iraq and Afghanistan. It will be important to help influence what the National Guard of the future will look like. The Hawaii Air National Guard missions are solid for the future and we should plan to add Cyber security in the out years. Our Army National Guard has a great plan for their future. It is important to keep that plan on track. Increasing their force structure will be a priority. The Adjutant Generals across the nation have a voice in these decisions.

Hawaii's Adjutant General is unique in that there are only 12 other States where the Adjutant General also performs the duties of Director of State Civil Defense and Homeland Security advisor to the Governor. Having those under one hat brings great synergy.

All my experiences from my time on active duty to commanding the Hawaii Air National Guard have helped me prepare for this position. I understand the stress our young adults and their families are under when they go off to war. When I returned from Vietnam, I experienced how we should never treat our veterans again. I worked in the Pentagon and gained the needed experience to operate at the national level and also worked closely with our congressional delegation. I led the rewrite of the Air National Guard strategic plan in 2008 and gained the respect of the TAGs when they all agreed to accept this plan. As the commander of the Hawaii Air National Guard (HIANG), I built a strategic plan, coordinated approvals at local and national levels and then implemented that plan putting the HIANG into solid missions for the next 20 years.

I have spent many hours in the State Civil Defense (SCD) emergency operations center on several occasions to monitor and coordinate the efforts of the National Guard with SCD during impending natural disasters. This allowed me to see how we might improve an already proven process.

My goal would be to place the over arching strategic direction of the State DoD towards ensuring the safety of the people of Hawaii. I will use the 2009 Hawaii Catastrophic All-Hazards Plan as our roadmap to achieving this goal. We will define all the capability gaps and work with the interagencies to fill those gaps. The Hawaii National Guard will align their strategic planning and future missions to this end. As we align everyone under a common goal, we will build a cohesive roadmap for allocating resources and support. This will also set in motion the process for us to work collaboratively and plan together. An important concept as we move forward will be building "Resilient Communities". We need our communities to take a proactive role in caring for themselves for the first day or so after a catastrophic event when emergency assistance may not yet be present. We will use this concept to raise awareness and increase preparation.

The State Department of Defense can be a catalyst for many of the goals of this administration and the State. We bring capabilities and resources in the areas of education, economy, energy, and technology. For example, in education we have already brought in a STEM program called "Starbase". We would like to open more programs like this across the State. Another program we are researching is one called "cyberNEXS" that would be introduced at the high school and college level. In terms of the economy, we plan to bring more federal dollars through military construction projects, infrastructure improvement projects, Department of Homeland Security grants, and working with others to use Hawaii as a test bed for various technologies. In energy, the military on this island is leading the way and the Hawaii National Guard units will become part of this. All future National Guard military construction will be LEED Silver and incorporate many "green building" designs. We plan to teach our members to be more energy efficient in the work place and that will transfer to changing their habits in their own homes. In terms of technology, our future missions will encompass ever greater amounts of cutting edge technology. These capabilities will transfer to the State in communications, cyber defense, command and control, surveillance and finding updated technology for providing a "common operating picture."

In closing, I'd like to express my appreciation to everyone who submitted testimony or who came to testify in person today. I thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you and for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering any questions.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR WILL ESPERO, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs

SUBMITTED BY MAJOR GENERAL DARRYLL D. M. WONG FEBRUARY 16, 2011

1. A description of your experiences in the field of Adjutant General or any related field.

The Adjutant General in Hawaii wears many hats. He commands the Army and Air Guard, oversees the Office of Veteran Services, and serves as both the Director of State Civil Defense and the Homeland Security Advisor to the Governor. This job spans both the military and civilian sectors. Its networks cover local agencies and groups as well as national organizations in the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, FEMA, and the Office of Veterans Affairs.

The diversified experiences that helped prepare me for the Adjutant General's position started when I flew for the active duty AF during the Vietnam era. As a young adult going to war, I came to understand the stress that is put on our military members and their families at home. Etched in my mind and senses to this day is the smell of war and the sadness I saw as I flew body bags out of Vietnam and later refugees and babies during the final evacuation. As a Vietnam veteran returning home I also experienced how we should never treat our veterans.

After serving on active duty I came home to Hawaii and joined the Hawaii Air National Guard as a part time traditional Guardsman. During my early career in the Hawaii Air National Guard I learned to lead the enlisted force as a maintenance officer and later I returned to flying and trained the 203rd Air Refueling tanker unit to prepare to go to war. I took this unit to war as the Director of Operations when during our deployment to Istre, France the war in Kosovo broke out and we switched from flying peacetime missions over Bosnia to flying the first flights at night in the Kosovo War.

At the same time I was hired as a pilot by Aloha Airlines. I experienced the stress and sacrifices of being a traditional guardsman with a fulltime civilian job who worked a 12-day week every month due to training weekends. Aloha Airlines also taught me how employees' love for one another can bring a company together, sacrificing for each other when needed. I also learned how bad management, detached from their employees can ruin the lives of many for the financial gain for a few. During my 34 years at Aloha, flying to all the islands, I have become very aware of the individual character of each of our islands. I love the diversity of all the islands. I would see local residents across the entire state every day at work and I learned through interaction that each island has its own characteristic beauty, challenge, and personality.

I witnessed firsthand the devastation of Hurricane Iniki while flying initial relief flights with Aloha Airlines delivering basic needs to the island and transporting people off the island. Later I deployed to Kauai leading Guardsmen clearing rubble. There I saw the important role the Guard has in responding to natural disasters.

In later years I was promoted to the Hawaii Air National Guard Headquarters where my experiences moved from managerial and tactical to more executive and strategic.

During my 9 years as the Commander of the Hawaii Air National Guard, I also worked additional jobs in Washington DC. I served as the Air National Guard Assistant to the AF Programmer. This office allocates money to future plans to make them operational. Another very important learning experience for me was

leading the rewrite of the Air National Guard Strategic Plan in 2008. I learned to lead outside the comfort of Hawaii, at a National level, and with a diversified group of General Officers from across the United States. I learned how to bring the needs of many different States under one focus for the greater good. The plan's acceptance by the 54 Adjutants General from across the nation helped me gain credibility and the trust of ANG leadership to be nominated to serve on the Air Reserve Forces Policy Committee. This body advises the Secretary and Chief of the Air Force on a wide array of policy issues for both the active duty AF, AF Reserves and the ANG.

During the past 9 years I have also completed many exchanges with foreign countries. I led delegations to China on behalf of The Office of the Secretary of Defense on Environmental Protection and later hosted Chinese delegations here in Hawaii. US Army Pacific Joint Task Force Homeland Defense uses me for China engagements dealing with Disaster Mitigation. Pacific Air Forces sent me to Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and India to represent them during closing ceremonies for military exercises. My visits also allowed our Embassies in those nations to bring together NGO's and inter-agencies to discuss mutual concerns. These experiences have all taught me "diplomacy". Working with foreign countries is much like dealing with any group with diverse backgrounds and interests. I learned to work collaboratively to understand everyone's intent, keep cultural sensitivity at the fore front, and find win-win solutions. These experiences also broadened my perspective on the issues of environmental protection as well as disaster mitigation at a world level.

For almost 30 years, I coached local athletes in basketball and volleyball from 9 year olds to adults – at local, state and national levels. This experience taught me team building, motivation, and the love for our youth. I know how important it is for us to continue to nurture them. How important it is to link their goals to that of the team.

To cement my years of experience I entered the Executive MBA program at the University of Hawaii in 2007. Management of our limited resources is vitally important in this critical time of doing more with less. I felt I needed to personally grow to in turn be able to grow our Hawaii Air National Guard.

I apologize in advance for this lengthy answer but it is important to me to explain how my life experiences have prepared me in a holistic way to become the Adjutant General in this new day and age. In a climate of declining budgets, a changing future for the National Guard post the deployments to the middle east, increasing growth of our veterans population, increasing trans national threats, increasing natural disasters due to "climate change", and the efficient use of Homeland Security money all require a broadly trained Adjutant General. One who can operate with respect at the national level yet understands the people of Hawaii and places their needs as the highest priority - leveraging life long experiences to achieve that end. One who has managed at the tactical, executive and strategic levels. A leader who can take a vision, break it into parts and lead the Department of Defense to achievement. In an age where no department works alone, we must have an understanding that we need to work collaboratively and transparently across the spectrum so that everyone's interest and intent are heard and win-win solutions are created. I believe my life of experiences have prepared me well to move this Department forward in an "innovative, efficient, collaborative and transparent" way while aligning with our Governor and Legislative Branch.

2. An assessment of your strengths and weakness

One of my strongest capabilities is my ability to translate vision into a strategic plan that accomplishes its objectives and also links everyone together - from the top down to the individual workers. Another strength that helps me accomplish objectives is my ability to be a good "diplomat." I work well with diverse agencies

and groups of people to resolve issues and to get down (unemotionally) to the interests of everyone to find win-win solutions. I am very creative when it comes to problem solving. I will find new ways to solve old problems. I find the key is to be a good listener. Another strength I possess is being a “people” person. I have an ability to connect to people because I truly have an interest in them. I am also not afraid to make the hard decisions when needed. I outwardly appear very quiet but deep inside I am a fierce competitor who will find a way to succeed and be the best I can be. And lastly, an important strength I feel I possess is my ability to bring “energy” into an organization - motivating its members to new and greater achievements.

On the weakness side I believe I don’t leverage technology enough to help me be more efficient with my time. I have a soft heart which sometimes makes hard decisions stressful for me. I find that I try to do too much. My first inclination is to always say “yes” to people who ask my help. Finally, I can slip into being a workaholic and upset the balance my life should have between work, family and relaxation.

3. An assessment of the department/agency’s strengths and weakness. Please include an explanation of how the department/agency’s strengths may be best utilized, as well as how the department/agency’s weaknesses may be improved.

The strength of the State Department of Defense lies in its dedicated employees, both military and civilian. They are well trained, focused, and ready to accomplish their mission. This assessment is not subjective, but one substantiated on the military side through inspections and actual combat, for State Civil Defense by their outstanding readiness posture and responses whenever a natural or manmade disaster has occurred, and for Office of Veterans Affairs by their extensive and successful programs caring for our veterans. This department through its years of service and its roles in serving our state and nation is well integrated within the community and with other agencies of the State and Federal government. Lastly, this department has the respect of the National Guard Bureau, Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and the Office of Veteran Affairs. I attribute this to both our Department’s dedicated leadership and the men and women who work with these agencies on a daily basis and in times of a natural disaster.

The strength of this department can be best utilized by enabling it to leverage State matching dollars to bring in federal dollars to improve our facilities and continue programs that target our state’s most at risk populations. Many of these programs match state funding at a three to one level. This funding directly transfers to jobs for our residents and programs that serve them. Most notable are highly successful programs for at risk youth, which during this time of budget cuts are in grave danger of closing. To continue these programs, an additional infusion of funds by the State and/or legislative approval is required.

Something that I believe can be both a Departmental strength and weakness are our long-term relationships with one another. It’s strength in that we are a strong team forged through our years of experience together. I have also seen it become a weakness when it prevents us from making tough leadership decisions involving a person who we consider a friend. We are working hard to ensure our leadership training addresses this issue and that our processes and procedures are fairly and consistently followed.

I believe a general Department weakness is our civilian community’s lack of understanding of the role of the National Guard, the equipment we have at our disposal and the process needed to use us for state requirements. We need to better educate and communicate to all stakeholders. I intend to develop a strategic communications plan to address this deficiency.

Looking ahead I see a potential threat to our future strength. Currently, we are doing very well filling our personnel requirements but two factors if not addressed could change this in the future. First, we have

experienced almost 10 years of increased operations where we have asked our members to serve their nation and they have responded. It has altered the balance of what the role and life of Guardsmen should be. It has been at a cost to their families and their employers. Going forward, we will ensure that we carefully manage our voluntary deployments to minimize negative consequences and ensure our members can be successful pursuing both a civilian and a Guard career. My second strength concern is the increasing difficulty recruiting for neighbor island vacancies. While we have many young people interested in joining the Guard, many are not able to pass the military entrance exam. Their test scores are too low and too many are disqualified for drug use. This Department will be a clear voice articulating the need for improving the education system on the neighbor islands. We will advocate and help implement STEM and drug demand reduction programs in these communities.

4. An overall vision for the department/agency, specifically what goals can be accomplished within the next four years and what types of annual benchmarks can be used to evaluate the department/agency's progress towards these goals.

For State Civil Defense, my goal is to identify all capability gaps in successfully implementing the 2009 Hawaii Catastrophic All-Hazards Concept Plan and take remedial action. The benchmarks are completion of the Operations Plan, identification of capability gaps, development and execution of strategies to fill those gaps, and finally successful implementation of the All-Hazards Plan. I view this as a continuing process where each year we will use the integrated Makani Pahili emergency response exercise to judge our current progress, continually improve our coordination processes, and identify further gaps.

For the Army and Air National Guard, our first goal is to continue to focus on war skills training to ensure we are always mission ready. This goal is evaluated through monthly status assessments, internal and external agency inspections, and actual combat deployments. We will also update service specific strategic plans to align current and future missions where applicable with capability gaps identified in the Hawaii Catastrophic plan. We intend to publish updated plans by 2012.

Additionally, each service has individual goals. For the Air National Guard, our goal is to complete military construction and training for the F-22 to bring that mission into Full Operational Capability by 2014. For the Army National Guard our ongoing goal is to successfully bring home the units currently deployed and prepare to deploy those that are in the queue for the next 4 years. We also intend to bring on the new Light Utility Helicopters, work to solidify a full-time mission to provide medical evacuation capability for island training ranges, and to increase force structure to at least 3,000. By their nature, the benchmark for these goals is successful completion.

Our first goal for the Office of Veteran Services is to sustain current infrastructure and complete projects already funded. Benchmarks are maintenance assessments and funding for repairs, as well as the successful completion of new projects. We will also look to the future and work to open a veterans center at the University of Hawaii to better help veterans get into school using their GI Bill and then help them succeed while there. Benchmarks will be enrollment and retention numbers. Lastly, we plan to begin to implement new projects on the islands of Maui and Hawaii that have completed successful needs assessments. The benchmarks for these projects will be funding, plan development and implementation.

Lastly, one very important goal of this department is to reinstate the State Tuition Assistance Program, which helps defray the cost for our young Guardsmen to attend college in the University of Hawaii system. The

benchmark for of this goal is the announcement by the current administration that the program will be funded once again.

5. The department/agency's top budgetary priority for the biennium.

In addition to funding the State Tuition Assistance Program, the department has two priorities for the biennium.

The first priority is funding to hire back positions lost in the recent budget cuts. This will allow our Department to run effectively which means we will be able to leverage large amounts of federal funds. For example, we can bring federal construction funds to the State of Hawaii but we need state funded project engineers to push those projects through. Additional state positions for Civil Defense would not only allow us to do our current jobs more effectively but would also provide time to submit multiple federal grants that in turn provide more funding and jobs for Hawaii.

Our other budgetary priority will be funding our participation in this year's APEC if state requirements are in excess of available federal funds.

6. An assessment of the department/agency staff morale, including the turnover rate for personnel

Across our department I assess the morale to be from good to excellent. In fulltime areas where manning has been cut too much, the workload is stressing our people; but because of their dedication morale is still good. For our military units, our members are excited about their jobs, volunteer for deployments and morale is excellent. Our guardsmen train together constantly and they take care of one another when they deploy.

Our turnover rate overall is very low. The retention rate of the Air National Guard is 94%. Our Army National Guard is slightly lower at around 80%. The Army Guard reports that many losses are due to their soldiers transferring to the active duty because they are unable to find good jobs here in Hawaii. Our civilian workforce turnover remains constant from previous years.

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